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ABSTRACT

Community colleges must assume a proactive leadership role to develop strategies that establish and maintain partnerships with business and other community organizations. San Juan College (SJC) has forged partnerships with a variety of local organizations, including governmental, civic, business, educational, medical, and cultural groups. Government and civic partnerships have been established with both the Chamber of Commerce and the Navajo Tribal Government. In addition, the college has hosted CoMex 2000, a regional conference of civic and government leaders from Colorado and New Mexico. To establish links with the business community, SJC operates its own small business development center and has joined four local organizations in creating the San Juan Economic Development Service to assist the county in attracting business and industry to the area. SJC's participation in educational alliances includes the establishment of 2 + 2 articulated programs with area vocational and local high schools; the Conference on Aging in collaboration with senior citizen groups; the Women's Conference; and many special activities for particular public school students. The college's Early Childhood Center not only offers special educational opportunities for children but also serves as a laboratory school for teachers. Recently, SJC was selected as a Beacon College in an intercollegiate alliance of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. In order to improve local health care services and education, SJC has fostered a close partnership with the Regional Medical Center and other local health care providers. The college also participates in the Fine Arts Committee, a partnership linking local artists, musicians, and patrons of the arts. Recreational partnerships include a collaboration with the city to develop an 18-hole golf course. Finally, SJC has acted as the catalyst in the development of a county-wide leadership training program. Through these diverse partnerships, SJC has been able to respond to community needs and gain broad community support. (JMC)

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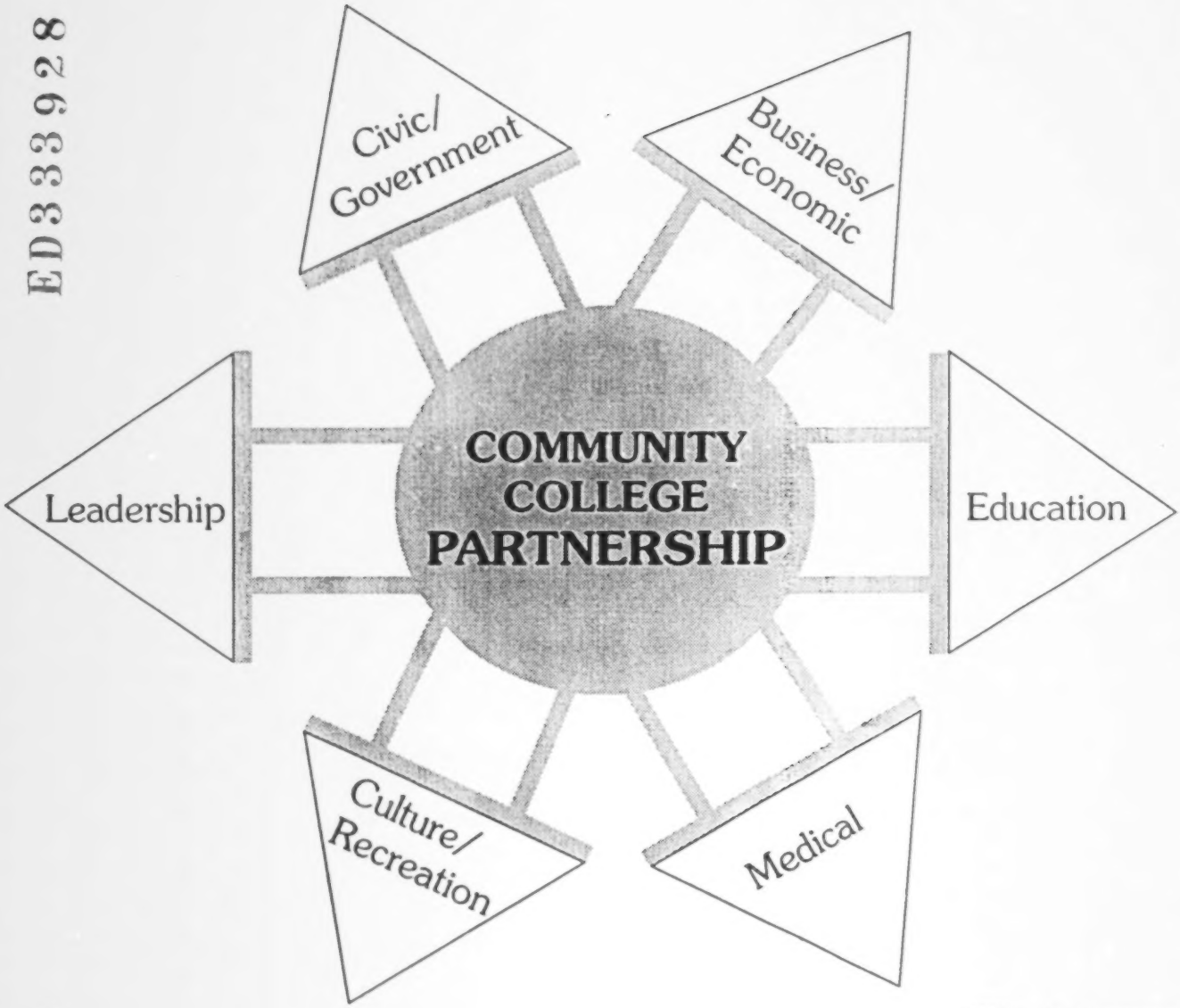

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS

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INTRODUCTION

The Community College must assume a proactive leadership role in establishing partnerships that link the college with business and other entities that comprise a community. Through identification of desired partnerships, successful strategies for establishing these links, and procedures that enable these partnerships to flourish, the Community College strengthens its mission of service to the community. The college becomes a catalyst that is proactive in creating symbiotic relationships that benefit the entire community and the citizens who live there. The college contributes to the quality of life that makes that community special.

The President or Chief Executive Officer of the College must be committed to the concept of building partnerships and must allow the staff and faculty to actively participate in the development of these partnerships. He or she must also spend the time to interact with the CEO's of the organizations involved to ensure that the commitment exists on both sides of the partnership.

The College must be ready and willing to seize opportunities that exist for building partnerships and be innovative in creating new opportunities. By assuming this leadership role, the college becomes the focus in the community when ideas and opportunities arise.

San Juan College, in Farmington, New Mexico, has established many partnerships with public schools, community organizations, as well as programs in economic and leadership development.

THE PARTNERSHIPS THAT LINK COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY AT SAN JUAN COLLEGE

A. GOVERNMENT AND CIVIC PARTNERSHIPS

San Juan College has established a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce in developing a downtown center that houses the Chamber, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the College Small Business Development Center. This building is financed by all entities involved and recently remodeled by the College Carpentry students. Project Read, the adult literacy program operated by the College is also housed in this building.

The President of San Juan College served an extended term as President of the Chamber and was selected the "Citizen of the Year". He also participates in a state-wide goodwill group that promotes the state to other areas and countries.

The College was host to a regional conference, CoMex 2000, that brought civic and governmental leaders from Colorado and New Mexico together to discuss mutual concerns and ways of working together to address these concerns. This partnership is a regional one involving elected government officials, civic leaders, and representatives of business and education.

The College has developed partnerships with the Navajo Tribal Government and has established a training program for Navajo Head Start Teachers that is nationally recognized. San Juan College has

extensive support programs in place especially for Native American students that has resulted in their being the best persisters and completers of any group on the campus.

Each year, the College works closely with the state legislators, briefing them on the situation at the institution and keeping them informed. As a result, the legislators are very supportive of the College and of its programs.

B. BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS

San Juan College joined four other organizations in sponsoring the San Juan County Economic Development Service to assist the county in attracting business and industry. The Chairman of the College Board, the President, and the Director of the College Community Learning Center serve on the Board of Directors for this organization. As a result of its establishment, the organization has been successful in bringing major business ventures to the county.

Representatives from the College serve on the Board of the Better Business Bureau which covers the four corners region. By establishing links with the three other states, the Better Business Bureau seeks to improve the status of business in the area.

The Small Business Development Center operated by the College helps individuals in business and those who seek to establish a business in determining their business requirements. The Center offers many workshops and seminars during the year on various business topics.

San Juan College has established many partnerships with

business and industry that train students in specific fields. The Toyota T-TEN program and the General Motors ASEP program offer state of the art automotive instruction for students who spend eight weeks in the classroom and eight weeks on the job. The automotive instructors have been quite instrumental in seeking to establish these partnerships.

Other training partnerships include an airline pilot training program with MESA aviation, management training for General Dynamics Corporation and many additional contract training programs.

C. EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

The College operates an Area Vocational School for the County that brings Junior and Senior High School students to the campus each day to take classes. A Council, comprised of representatives of the area secondary schools and the College directs the activities of the Area Vocational School. The College has established 2+2 Articulated Programs with the area high schools and developed coordinated curricula. Each year, the secondary schools and the College combine their resources to hold a County-wide In-Service at the College. Over 100 workshops are offered on various topics and approximately 1800 teachers and administrators attend. The College hosted a Northwest New Mexico Regional Articulation Conference for all of the high schools and colleges in the region and followed up with several topical workshops during the year.

In order to keep the communication links strong between the College and the secondary schools, the President meets each month

with the Superintendents and the Dean meets with the Principals of the area high schools.

Special partnerships include the Conference on Aging in which the Senior Citizen groups coordinate activities with the College, the Women's Conference, and many special activities for particular public school students. The College has an Early Childhood Center which not only offers special educational opportunities for children, but serves as a Laboratory School for teachers. Recently, the College has established a Kids college which provides classes in many areas for children each summer.

One of the most unique partnerships is the Possible Dream Program which links the College, US West and the public schools in a pre-paid tuition scholarship that provides two years of college for every eighth grade student in the county. These students are given a scholarship to San Juan College upon graduation from secondary school and provided counseling throughout their high school years.

Recently, San Juan College was selected one of seven Beacon Colleges by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. This program will feature a partnership among colleges in the southwest that are involved with Early Childhood Education Programs. San Juan College will share the experiences gained by this institution and together with the associate colleges, develop new training materials in Early Childhood Education.

San Juan College has developed a reciprocal partnership with Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado enabling students to cross

the state line and attend the out-of-state institution at in-state tuition rates. Many San Juan College graduates obtain a Baccalaureate Degree at Fort Lewis after obtaining their Associate Degree at San Juan College.

Another important partnership involves the literacy program "Project Read." This partnership brings together volunteers throughout the county who are dedicated to the concept that "each one teach one." Many individuals have been able to learn to read through this program and have gone on to take adult basic education courses and eventually, enroll in college courses.

D. MEDICAL AND HEALTH CARE PARTNERSHIP

San Juan College has developed a close partnership with the Regional Medical Center as well as other health care facilities in the area. This partnership has developed programs that benefit the entire community which include co-sponsored courses, clinical opportunities for students, interaction among staff, and increased awareness of health care education issues in the county.

The College has had a representative elected to the Board of Trustees for the Regional Medical Center and has a member serving on the Hospital Corporation. As a result of this close relationship, the Medical Center has given the College $30,000 each year for the past four years to enable the College to increase the number of faculty members in the Nursing Program. This year, the Medical Center also contributed $5,000 toward Nursing scholarships with no stipulation that they be awarded only to graduates who were planning to work at the Center.

Next year, San Juan College will be the site for the annual Health Fair which is sponsored by the Medical Center. As a co-sponsor, the College will work closely with the Medical Center to coordinate all of the activities. The College will open a new Wellness Center this year which will feature a computerized personalized fitness plan for participants. Rehabilitation plans for medical patients will be coordinated with the Medical Center and local physicians.

The College will continue to offer health related courses and seminars during the year.

E. CULTURE AND RECREATION PARTNERSHIPS

The Fine Arts Committee is a partnership developed with local artists, musicians and patrons of the arts to coordinate activities beyond the usual College offerings. This Committee has established a series of cultural events each year including a Young Artists Recital for local students, the Artists Invitational Art Show featuring local artists, musical presentations and special events for the public school teachers. This Committee has further strengthened the partnerships in the community by building links to the other arts organizations in the county.

As the College will construct a new Fine Arts Center over the next few years, cultural offerings will be expanded to utilize the new 800-seat theater and conference rooms.

The present college theater and meeting rooms are the site of many community activities serving approximately 60,000 people each year.

The San Juan Symphony and San Juan College have developed a partnership to co-sponsor the concerts in the College theater. The College provides the support required to prepare the programs as well as providing the facility. Again, the Board of this organization as well as the Community Concert Board, the Northwest Fine Arts Alliance, the San Juan Stage Company, and other arts groups in the county have College representation.

Each year, the College provided a production specifically designed for Childrens Theater. Thousands of public school children are bused to the College to see the plays, often their first exposure to theater and drama. The public school teachers work with the children during the year in preparation for experiencing the play. One recent production involved the children preparing masks for a Caribbean folk drama and studying the geography of the area and customs of the people prior to attending the play.

Another cultural activity involving the partnership with the public schools is the College Planetarium that presents special shows for the students, both elementary and secondary. More than 4,000 visitors attend shows annually. The College also has a Space Museum that is an attraction for the public school students.

Recreational Partnerships include a cooperative effort with the city in the development of an 18 hole Golf Course. The college leased the land to the city for 99 years and a world-class golf course was constructed as a result of a local gross receipts tax election. The College has also acquired a golf course in

partnership with one of the local public school districts. This facility will be expanded to include soccer fields and other recreational areas in the future.

Last summer, the College offered a Golf Program for children that was taught by a professional using whole-brain learning theory. Over 200 children participated in this program.

A partnership with Toyota Motors has resulted in an annual golf tournament that benefits the College Foundation. This tournament is co-sponsored by one of the local banks and is a true community effort.

The Outdoor Recreation Program had developed numerous partnerships with community groups who request special trips, equipment, classes and workshops. The College offers rental equipment, professional trip guides, and instruction in many recreational areas. On the campus, the College has an outdoor hiking trail, a nature trail and a fitness trail for the community.

Of special interest is the community-wide partnership initiated by the College that has developed a professional outdoor pageant called "Anasazi--The Ancient Ones". This pageant is staged in an outdoor amphitheater build especially for the production by the city and has been supported by the College and a local group of volunteers. Now in its fourth year, the pageant attracts people from all over the United States and many foreign countries increasing the economic impact of tourism in the county.

A new venture in partnerships is Kokopelli Valley, a downtown center that the College will develop to promote the cultural

aspects of the area. Ancient anthropology, archaeology, and special topics of interest will be featured. To strengthen the cultural partnerships, San Juan College has initiated a series of weekend adventures that address the Native American culture. These weekends feature speakers on anthropology and archaeology as well as visits to Anasazi sites. This year, the College will sponsor a trip to the Hopi Mesa villages.

F. LEADERSHIP PARTNERSHIPS

San Juan College has created a program that identifies, enlightens, and encourages emerging leaders in the county. Now in its third year, Leadership San Juan offers monthly sessions on issues impacting San Juan County. With a class of 25 each year, these enthusiastic graduates of the program are already becoming active leaders in the community. By forming a partnership with representatives throughout the county, San Juan College was the catalyst for the formation of this program.

The Alumni of Leadership San Juan are developing a Student Leadership Program for high school and college students that will be patterned after Leadership San Juan. The students will attend nine sessions featuring leadership skills as well as issues impacting the county. The program is aimed at students that have leadership potential but may not be the over-achievers that typically stand out in high school.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the creation of these partnerships, San Juan College has increased the support of the community for the college immensely. Once looked upon as a small branch campus, the College has become the catalyst for many activities throughout the county. When a major project is envisioned, the College is brought in as a key player. This support was manifested in the four-to-one support in a $12 million bond election for construction of classrooms, laboratories, and a fine arts center.

A recent public image opinion survey conducted by a professional organization confirmed that almost all San Juan County residents are familiar with San Juan College. The college is viewed as a source of community pride and is considered a good value to county taxpayers. While San Juan College is recognized for its career instructional programs and academic credit courses, the programs most frequently evaluated as "excellent" by those who have used the respective programs are the adult basic education and reading courses, career preparation credit courses and cultural and arts events. Of those responding to the survey, 95 percent agreed that San Juan College is a source of community pride.

The partnerships developed by San Juan College have built the concept that this institution belongs to the community.

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